

# POLAND

## Acid Test For A People's Peace

By Bertram D. Wolfe

THE RECOGNITION by Russia on January 5 of the Moscow-created Lublin Committee as the "Provisional Government of Poland" creates a grave crisis among the United Nations.

The original intention of the United Nations was to postpone the settlement of all controversial issues and territorial changes until the war was won. But by now it must be clear that peace is not something which will be born fresh, clean and whole, the day the last gun is stilled. *The peace is being made piecemeal.* It is being made by the installation or overthrow of provisional governments; by the dictation from London and Moscow of the composition of cabinets; by the suppression of democratic parties and the arrest, deportation or purge of their active supporters; by actions of advancing armies of liberation, which are also armies of occupation. In short, the structure of the future peace is being determined by the policies and politics being pursued during the war.

The "peace table" will be faced with a whole series of *faits accomplis*. Some of them, especially where they involve purge of whole parties and tendencies, may prove fatally irrevocable. Because of Poland's central position at the heart of Europe; because of its precarious existence between two great powers, Germany and Russia; because it was the first nation to say no to Hitler's hitherto unchallenged expansion; because it exemplifies in the most intense form all the issues of the peace—Poland has become the test case for the immediate future of the world.

### WHAT HAPPENED AT TEHERAN?

Here is what former Polish Premier Mikolajczyk told Anne O'Hare McCormick of the *New York Times* in December, after he returned from one of his fruitless efforts to reach an agreement with Stalin on Polish independence:

He [Mikolajczyk] went to Moscow prepared to negotiate on the basis of the Curzon line, but found no opportunity for discussion. Stalin told him flatly that everything had been settled at Teheran, and nothing remained but for him to sign the agreement already made and cooperate with the Lublin Committee. (Dec. 20, 1944)

And here is what Raymond Daniell of the *Times* cabled:

Premier Stalin sat as judge and jury, and Mr. Churchill had the role of public prosecutor. It was Mr. Churchill who did all the arguing for Premier Stalin at that latest Moscow discussion about Poland's future boundaries. . . . When Mr. Mikolajczyk pleaded for mercy by asking that Vilna and Lwow be included within Poland's frontiers, Mr. Molotov interrupted him by saying: "There is no use discussing that, it was all settled at Teheran." (Dec. 12, 1944)

The Teheran agreement was "one of those great historic partition treaties," was the way the *London Observer* of December 18 summed it up. Not only Poland, but the Balkans, the Baltic, and all Europe, were divided into two spheres of power.

Moreover, the most shocking aspect of this arrangement, in which Poles were traded for Greeks, is that neither Poles nor Greeks were represented at Teheran when their fate was being decided. Is it to be wondered at that the whole moral climate of the war has been steadily degenerating since Teheran?

### THE HEART OF EUROPE

Poland—fateful fact!—lies in an open plain between Germany and Russia. Russia-Poland-Germany: that triangle of relationships is the heart of Europe. When there is sickness there, Europe is sick, and the peace and order existing are a false order and a false peace.

When Catherine, Frederick and Maria Theresa began the first partition of Poland in 1772, they laid the basis for the *Dreikaiserbund*—an unholy alliance of guilty accomplices, forced to work together for the crushing of every movement for national independence in Europe, lest it prove contagious and Poland arise from the ashes of partition. It was that partition which made the Romanovs into the watchdogs of reaction in Europe, and turned their once tolerant conglomerate of nationalities into a prison house of peoples.

Only when Russia and Germany finally parted company over conflicts in other areas and when paradoxically—both of them suffered defeat in World War I, did Poland arise phoenix-like from the ashes of its desolation.

With its history of a century and a half of suppressed struggle the new Poland suffered inevitably from an exacerbated nationalism which made things hard for the minorities under its rule. It



was tortured, too, by fear of renascent German and renascent Russian might. All through the thirties it went to great lengths to keep peace with its two powerful neighbors. And this, it must be noted, while it was under the rule of the reactionary, dictatorial, nationalist, "Colonels' Government" of Pilsudski and Beck. Beneath the surface, the democratic, progressive, socialist and agrarian forces gained steadily in strength and cohesion, so that they alone were able to form a government commanding mass support when Poland was attacked, and they alone were able to carry on the resistance underground. That was the origin of the four-party agreement (Socialist, Peasant, Christian Democratic and National Democratic)<sup>1</sup> which has secretly governed underground Poland and whose public expression is the Government-in-Exile in London.

On February 10, 1935, Field Marshal Goering suggested to Polish Foreign Minister "an anti-Russian alliance and a joint attack on Russia . . . the Ukraine would become a Polish sphere of influence and North Western Russia would be Germany's." Again on February 16, 1937, Goering renewed the proposal. (Texts in *Polish Facts and Figures*, No. 8, Sept. 1, 1944.) The offer was made again by von Ribbentrop on September 29, 1938 and, for the last time, on March 21, 1939.<sup>2</sup> On each occasion the Polish Government declined to entertain the proposal. Thereupon, Hitler decided to punish Poland for its "impudence" and to make it the next area of German expansion.

At this point, alarmed at the results of their appeasement in connection with the German minority areas of Czechoslovakia, the British and French governments decided that it was time to call a halt to German expansion. They decided to urge Poland, a second-rate power, to run the risk of war with the German military machine. To that end they offered Poland a guarantee. Since the question of Poland's independence and frontiers is now under dispute, the language of the public statement of the British Premier to Parliament (March 31, 1939) is of interest:

I now have to inform the House that . . . in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. . . . I may add that the French Government authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position. . . . (Text in British *Blue Book*; emphasis mine.)

#### THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT

Now Hitler's problem became what it has always been when Germany engages in war with

the West: to safeguard the rear in the East—to avoid, at any cost, a two-front war. He bethought himself of the possibility "to restore the classic relationship between Germany and Russia" by a new partition of Poland.<sup>3</sup> That partition, Poland's fourth, was the real foundation of the Russo-German Non-Aggression and Friendship Pact of August 23, 1939, which assured the German rear and thus unleashed the Second World War. Such was Poland's reward for having refused a pact with Germany against Russia.

Two days after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was made public, Great Britain renewed her guarantee to Poland, in still more sweeping terms. Again Poland was made the judge of which territorial demand it considered "vital to resist." The guarantee was extended to include "any European power" and even "any attempt to undermine independence by processes of economic penetration or in any other way." (Full text in *Government Blue Book*, London, 1939).

For seventeen days the Polish army fought against the fresh might of the Wehrmacht (a longer time by far than the much mightier Red Army was able to hold its portion of the Polish plain in 1941). Badly hurt, but unbroken, the Polish armies retreated and converged towards the East and South, with the aim of a last stand fight in the protective terrain of the marshes and the Carpathians, and the hope of seeking refuge in Russia if all were lost. Then, on September 17, the Red Army struck from the rear. Not Germany, but Poland, was compelled to fight a war on two fronts.<sup>4</sup>

The precision with which Red Army and Wehrmacht moved to their appointed demarcation line showed how carefully this joint operation had been worked out in advance.<sup>5</sup> Russia got 77,620 square miles, Germany 72,806. But Germany's portion held twenty-two million people and Russia's only thirteen million. However to Russia that area was of prime importance because it contained in its multi-national population most of the Ukrainians not already in the Soviet Union. Thus it promised to put an end to the six-century long struggle for the control of the Ukraine, originally part of the Polish Kingdom. And only with all the Ukrainians in one state would it be easy to keep in check tendencies for an independent, united Ukraine.

"Both countries recognize this division as final,"

<sup>3</sup> See Ribbentrop's statement as quoted in the French Yellow Book, *Documents Politiques 1938-9*, Document 123; and Hitler's address on the 7th anniversary of his seizure of power. Relevant citations available in Dallin: *op. cit.* pp. 27ff.

<sup>4</sup> Despite the heartbreaking news, Warsaw, largely under Socialist leadership, held out for three weeks, from Sept. 8-29.

<sup>5</sup> See *Dienst aus Deutschland*, Sept. 23, 1939 and text of Molotov-Ribbentrop "Treaty of Mutual Friendship and Agreement on Frontiers."

<sup>1</sup> The National Democrats were a conservative party opposed to the pre-war "Colonels' dictatorship."

<sup>2</sup> Dallin: *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy*. Yale, 1943, pp. 6 and 15.



read the Molotov-Ribbentrop declaration to the world, "and will resist any interference on the part of other powers." England and France, the declaration continued, which had gone to war to safeguard the integrity of Poland, should recognize that the very country had ceased forever to exist. Both governments:

"... will pool their efforts to liquidate the war. . . . Should the efforts of both governments fail, then the fact will be established that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, and the Governments of Germany and Soviet Russia will consult as to necessary measures."

The high point of this uneasy "friendship" was reached that December 21, when Ribbentrop telegraphed to Stalin:

Remembering those historic hours in the Kremlin which laid the foundation for the decisive turn in the relationship between our two great peoples and thus created the basis for a long and lasting friendship, I beg you to accept on your sixtieth birthday my warmest congratulations.

And Stalin replied:

The friendship of the peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union, cemented by blood, will long remain firm.

The blood was Polish blood.<sup>(\*)</sup>

#### POLAND RISES ONCE MORE

Fortunately for Poland, and for the honor and ultimate destiny of Russia and of the world, the cement did not prove firm. Drunk with easy victories over Poland, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, and France, with only England to "finish off"—Hitler broke the pact and attacked Russia in June 1941. The Russians, determined to Russianize the Eastern half of Poland which they had gotten from the pact with Hitler, had been engaged in wholesale arrests, deportations, and even executions. Their aim had been nothing less than to eliminate all possible leadership of resistance and nationhood. The first batch of exiles were army officers. The next were "members of the Polish intelligentsia, state and local government officials, teachers, judges, lawyers and the professional classes generally, together with a number of Jews and Ukrainians of the same classes, and other middle

<sup>(\*)</sup>The Red Army lost 737 killed and 1,862 wounded. The Polish losses are unknown but *Red Star* reports the taking of over 190,000 Polish military prisoners in the brief campaign.



All shaded and dotted areas are pre-war Poland. The two eastern areas (marked with diagonals) are Russia's share of the Molotov-Ribbentrop partition. Russia's present demands follow substantially the same line, the only importance being the Bialystok region, where the so-called Curzon Line is used instead. The lower diagonal area (the darkest portion of the map) is Eastern Galicia with Lwow as its principal city. Eastern Galicia never belonged in Russia in all the thousand years of its history, but was seized by the Ribbentrop agreement and is now claimed by an extension of the "Curzon" Line. To "compensate" Poland for the loss of nearly half of the territory it went to war to defend, Stalin now proposes to cede to it a portion of East Prussia (he will take the area around Koenigsberg himself), and to attach to Poland the area marked "Germany" on this map.

class people." Then deportation was extended to Polish and Jewish labor leaders and leaders of the Socialist Party, the Jewish socialist Bund, and all other Polish parties, democratic as well as reactionary. Thereafter, deportation was extended "to Polish and Ukrainian farmers."

"The main movement from Soviet-occupied Poland to the East began in June 1941, immediately before the German invasion, and increased in volume after the German invasion had begun. Hundreds of thousands of people were either forcibly removed or evacuated to inner and Asiatic Russia. . . . According to a statement issued by the Polish Foreign Minister on May 7, 1942, one and a half million persons were transferred. The [Jewish] Joint Distribution Committee estimates the total number of evacuees from Soviet-occupied Polish territory at two million, of whom 600,000 were Jews, these figures including those who were transferred in 1939-40."

This quotation and all words in quotation marks

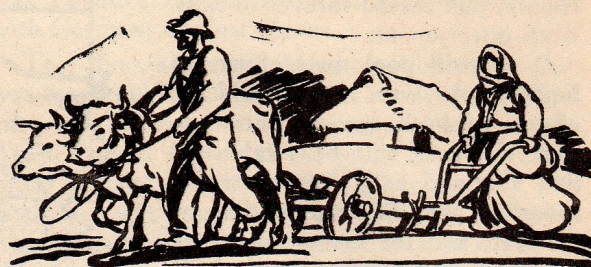


in the preceding paragraph are from the authoritative study of Eugene M. Kulischer: *The Displacement of Population in Europe* (published by the International Labor Office of the League of Nations, Montreal, 1943, pp. 58-59.) He also includes a breakdown of 1,200,000 of the total, by regions of Russia and Siberia to which they were sent, a breakdown "on the basis of information collected locally." Most interesting are the large numbers of Jews. Some of these were refugees from German-occupied Western Poland who did not wish to become Soviet citizens. Others were Polish-speaking and Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Poland, including Jewish socialists and trade unionists. Others, it should be noted, were evacuated only after the German armies began their advance, and were glad to be sent to Russian concentration camps as preferable to German. Professor Kulischer points out that the figure of 600,000 Jews is accepted by the Institute of Jewish Affairs, whereas the American Jewish Yearbook (Vol. 44, p. 239) gives it as 500,000. The lowest estimate was made from Moscow itself, by the Russian correspondent of the Jewish Telegraph Agency, Wolkowicz, who sets the figure as 350,000 (*Contemporary Jewish Record*, April 1943.) The most probable figure is that of the Joint Distribution Committee which handles relief. In any case, several hundred thousand Jews, many Ukrainian farmers, political leaders and leaders of the Ukrainian Uniate Catholic Church, and many White Russians—figures not available—were deported during the period of the friendship pact with Germany. These facts dispose completely of the argument to the effect that only "ethnic Poles" failed to welcome the seizure of Eastern Poland.

#### FROM SOVIET JAILS TO CABINETS

So thorough was this search for all possible sources of leadership in Eastern Poland that when the Russians decided to set up the Lublin puppet government, they had to use a number of ex-Poles who had become Soviet citizens (for example the Communist, Bierut, Chairman of the Council) and had to take others out of Soviet jails or concentration camps. For instance, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Lublin Polish auxiliary troops of the Red Army, General Berling, was in a Soviet prison camp until Sikorski negotiated his release in 1941. Unique is the case of Dr. Sommerstein, until recently the Jewish representative in the Lublin Council, who was both prisoner and Soviet citizen in turn. He came from the extreme right of Polish Jewry, belonging to the Right Wing of Zionism. At a time when all other Jewish groups boycotted the vote on the Constitution of 1935, as a Deputy in the Polish Sejm he voted yes.<sup>7</sup> While in a Soviet jail after 1939, he was pressed to accept Soviet citizenship and become a

Soviet agent for the purposes of forming the Lublin Council. He did, and soon after blossomed out from jailbird to Lublin leader. He was even named as delegate "from Polish Jewry" to the recent World Jewish Congress in Atlantic City. But he was incautious enough to ask for a visa for his daughter also. His own visa was cancelled and he has disappeared from the Lublin Provisional Government. Such thumbnail biographies give the reader some idea of the conditions under which



the Lublin Government was formed. We need only add the detail that some of the members of the London Government are also ex-residents in Soviet prisons. One good example is the venerable Polish historian Stanislaw Grabski, President of the National Council of Poland. Another example is Jan Kwapinski, Socialist metal worker, who was in a Tsarist prison from 1906 to 1917, then became first chairman of the Orel Soviet. He returned to Poland to lead the Farm Laborers Union, and in 1939 was elected Mayor of Lodz, a position which legally he holds to this day. The NKVD (Soviet secret police) deported him to Siberia once more, when the Red Army attacked Poland in 1939. Freed by the Stalin-Sikorski agreement of 1941, he went to London and is now Minister of Industry in the Government-in-Exile.

If the Poles were generous in forgiving all these outrages, the Russian government, in the first flush of its new agreements with the United Nations against the invading Germans, was generous, too. The first sentence of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30, 1941 reads:

One, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognizes the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 as to territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity.

To make this historic sentence doubly clear, the British Foreign Office, the same day, quoted an official note of Eden to Sikorski:

On the occasion of the signature of the Polish-Soviet agreement of today . . . I desire to assure you that His Majesty's Government do not recognize any territorial changes which have been effected in Poland since August 1939.

<sup>7</sup> The frequently raised political issue of the 1935 Constitution versus the 1921 Constitution is a false issue. The London government is made up of parties and individuals who fought the 1935 Constitution and the Pilsudski-Beck government. Most of them were in jail under the latter. They long ago voted to call a Constituent Assembly, not to return to the Constitution of 1921, but to adopt a new democratic Constitution as soon as the country is free to express its will.



And the British communiqué continued:

General Sikorski handed Mr. Eden the following reply: "This corresponds with the view of the Polish Government, which . . . has never recognized any territorial changes effected in Poland since the outbreak of the war."

Those notes of Stalin, Eden and Sikorski leave no shadow of a doubt that the intention, like the original British guarantee, was to restore the frontiers of Poland, to defend which war had been declared.

#### THE POLISH OFFICERS IN KATYN

On September 17, 1940, the first anniversary of the invasion of Poland by the Red Army, that army's official organ, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), boasted that in the brief attack 191,000 Polish prisoners had been taken, including 10,000 officers. These officers had been kept in three large prison camps: at Kozielsk, at Starobielsk, at Ostaszkoff and a small group, near 400, at Giazovec. But on April 5, 1940, the Soviet government had begun "transferring them to some unknown destination." All communication with their families ceased.

Now the Polish Government desperately needed these officers to form new armies of the hundreds of thousands of prisoners in the Soviet Union. However, only the small group of officers who had been interned at Giazovec put in appearance at the mobilization centers, while not one officer showed up from those who had been in the major camps. Gravely concerned, the Polish Government repeatedly asked for information. They were told by Molotov, by Vishinsky, and by Stalin himself, that these officers had all been released and would appear in time. Sometimes the excuse was given that they had been transferred to a Far Northern camp and could not come until Winter was over; that they were making their way on foot. In December, 1941, General Sikorski, visiting Stalin in the Kremlin, gave him a partial list (3,843 army officers). Once more Stalin answered that they had been set free.

In April 1943, the German press and radio announced that they had found the bodies of thousands of executed Polish officers buried in the forest of Katyn, near Smolensk. Only then did the Soviet news agency, Tass (April 16, 1943) declare that the Polish officers had never been transferred inland but had been captured by the Germans in the summer of 1941.

To make matters worse, the Polish underground was still reeling from the shock of Litvinov's letters to the Presidents of the American Federation of Labor, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, admitting that Henryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter had been executed by the NKVD. These two outstanding leaders of the Polish Socialist movement and the Polish Jewish Labor movement had been heroes of socialist and

anti-fascist struggle all their lives. Imprisoned by the Russians in 1939 they had been released by the agreement of July 1941 and were engaged in the task of building a world Jewish anti-fascist movement. Then they were arrested again at midnight on December 4, 1941. Because of their prominence in the Labor and Socialist International, labor leaders and leaders of American public opinion, including Eleanor Roosevelt, signed petitions for their release. For more than a year no answer, then—though it seems they were shot on December 5, 1941—in February 1943, Maxim Litvinov officially informed William Green and Philip Murray that they had been executed. The news that these beloved Jewish anti-fascist leaders had been killed by the Russian government had barely filtered into the Polish underground, when the German radio began its series of gruesome broadcasts on the murdered officers in the Katyn forest.

The Polish government would have been unworthy of the trust of its people if it had not attempted to clarify this terrible state of affairs. It had recourse to the only neutral agency in wartime, the International Red Cross at Geneva. The answer of the Russian government was to refuse the Red Cross permission to investigate, and to break off relations with the Polish Government. It charged the Polish Government, which had been conducting herein and effective underground resistance to Germany since 1939, with being "pro-German."

Even after April 1943 had the Russians permitted a Red Cross inquiry or invited United Nations representatives to be present when they exhumed the bodies and investigated—their first duty was to invite the Poles to be present!—doubts might have been resolved. But these bodies were dug up, a report and exhibit prepared by Russian authorities, and then a few representatives of the foreign press were called in . . . Here are some passages from W. H. Lawrence's account from Smolensk, to the *New York Times* of January 27, 1944:

The Russian authorities showed us hundreds of bodies, each with a bullet hole in the base of the skull . . . each execution seemed to have been individual. The reporters said that the experiences of the German atrocity investigations at Kiev and Kharkov were mass executions carried out with machine guns. . . .

Some wore heavy field overcoats lined with fur. Later we asked the commission why some prisoners were so warmly dressed if they had been shot by the Germans in August or September. Mr. Tolstoi answered that the prisoners were wearing the clothing they had when they were captured by the Red Army in 1939. [That would mean that for a year and a half they had been wearing furs summer and winter.]

However this terrible question will eventually be solved, the perfectly proper request for a Red Cross investigation was only the pretext for break-



ing off relations with the Polish Government, and subsequently setting up the Lublin puppet government. The real reason was that, after it had become clear that the Russian armies would hold in retreat and the tide would eventually turn, Stalin decided to return to his demand for approximately half of Poland, as based on the Molotov-Ribbentrop line of 1939.

#### "THE CURZON LINE"

The Molotov-Ribbentrop line for the partition of Poland has been tactfully rebaptized the "Curzon Line." But, with the exception of a small sector around Bialystok, which the Russians are willing to permit the Poles to keep, it is the Molotov-Ribbentrop line of 1939. The part that Russia now wishes to annex without negotiation and without waiting till the war's end, is slightly more than 45 percent of pre-war Poland, instead of slightly more than 50 percent.

To call it the "Curzon Line" is but a face-saving device to make it easier for Churchill to bring pressure on the Polish Government in London, and to obscure from world public opinion the fact that it is essentially the Molotov-Ribbentrop line. Actually the line antedates Churchill's countryman, Lord Curzon, for it is substantially the same line arrived at when Catherine divided the spoils of Poland with Frederick.

Lord Curzon's name got attached to this old historic frontier between Germany's share of partitioned Poland and Russia's, briefly, and quite by accident, in 1919. Poland had just been reborn during World War I and, under Marshal Pilsudski, had made an effort to recover all of its old territory, or set up buffer states between Poland and the Soviet Union. But the young Polish state was too weak and war-ravaged to make good its over-ambitious drive. When its armies were repulsed and rolled back, the Soviet forces in turn tried to take all of Poland and sovietize it. They smashed up to the very gates of Warsaw, but then proved too weak to finish the job. Both sides became anxious for peace. The Allied Powers, who had just reconstituted Poland, proposed a temporary military demarcation line between the two exhausted armies, while peace was being negotiated. The note specifically stated: "The rights that Poland may be able to establish over the territories situated to the East of the said line are expressly reserved."

Moreover, a glance at the map of Central Europe will reveal that the "Curzon" armistice line of World War I did not include a single square mile of that part of Poland which had belonged to Austria-Hungary, the area known as Eastern Galicia. The Soviet armies at the time had not entered any part of Eastern Galicia. It is an area which for more than 600 years was a

part of Poland, and never in all history belonged to Russia for a single day, until Molotov and Ribbentrop carved up Poland in September 1939. Yet the Russians claim it today.

As if to make matters historically still more clear, the Soviet Government rejected Lord Curzon's demarcation line as a suggested territorial line which would be "unfair to Poland," and told the Poles that if they would negotiate directly they would get a territorial line more favorable to their hopes and claims. On March 18, 1921, the two countries had signed the Treaty of Riga. The line agreed upon was neither the line of old Poland before the First Partition, nor the line between Catherine's and Frederick's shares in 1772. It was roughly the line of the Second Partition of Poland in 1793, except—and this is most important—*except that the Poles kept all of Eastern Galicia*. On the basis of this line, peace was established between the two countries and maintained in a series of non-aggression and friendship pacts from 1921 to 1939.

During all the period from 1921 to 1939 the Soviet Government praised the settlement as fair to Poland and favorable to the Soviet Union. As late as 1941—I have not seen later Russian histories—the "History of the USSR," published by the Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences and approved as a Secondary School textbook by the Soviet Commissariat of Education, stated:

In March 1921 in Riga a peace treaty was signed between Soviet Russia and Poland. By the Treaty of Riga the Soviet Republic established for itself a more advantageous frontier with Poland, since it moved the frontier 80 to 100 kilometers farther to the West. (Moscow, 1941, p. 252.)

#### ETHNICS, RELIGION, PLEBISCITES

Now world and American public opinion is being bewildered by a complex of new arguments about the Molotov-Ribbentrop "Curzon" line. Eastern Poland is ethnologically composite. It contains Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, White Russians, in numbers which make the Poles the largest single ethnic group, but not an absolute majority. If an honest plebiscite were taken, it is argued, all but the Poles would vote to become Soviet. To this a democratic-minded American would be moved to answer: "Then why not wait until after the war—surely no honest plebiscite can be taken under the conditions of mass deportations and war—and give the people of the area a chance to vote whether they want to be Polish citizens or Soviet citizens?"

But the "ethnic" argument is less than honest, as proved by the hundreds of thousands of Jews, Ukrainians and even White Russians which the Red Army deported from this area. The Ruthenians (Galician Ukrainians) have never been altogether happy under Polish rule, but what the



Ukrainian National Democratic Union of Eastern Poland has always wanted is not to be joined to Russia but to become an independent Ukrainian country. The rather cruel attempt at Polonization of Eastern Galicia by the Poles in 1930 might have made these Ukrainians more pro-Russian were it not for the forced collectivization and man-made famine in the Soviet Ukraine in 1932. These Ukrainians of Galicia were even more anti-Russian than anti-Polish, and it was among them that Hitler found a few Quislings, whereas he could find none among the Poles or Jews of Poland.

If the Russians had permitted a true plebiscite in 1939, when there was no Polish state left and the choice was: To Germany or to Russia, or a new independent state of Eastern Poland—possibly the Russians would have gotten a sizable majority for incorporation. But they have so long been unaccustomed to permit their own citizens to choose between rival sets of candidates and rival platforms or proposals that they were in-

capable of holding a true plebiscite. First they deported hundreds of thousands of leaders and active members of all parties and unions, then they rigged up a totalitarian "plebiscite" in which there was only one set of candidates.

How little the Soviet authorities took this totalitarian travesty seriously is evidenced by the fact that they have just ceded Bialystok to the Lublin puppet government, although it has an "ethnic" majority of White Russians and Jews and also voted "99 percent" for incorporation into White Russia, of which it became the capital.

The fact is that besides "blood brotherhood," to quote the original Soviet document of annexation, there is the question of democracy and civil liberties versus dictatorship, the question of religion, the question of property forms, and many other issues which would influence voters in a free election. The Ukrainians of Eastern Poland, for example, are largely Catholic Uniates and not Russian Orthodox, while the Poles are Roman Catholics.

## London

**TOMASZ ARCISZEWSKI**—Prime Minister and President-designate. Chairman of the central committee of the Polish Socialist Party prior to 1939; leader of the underground Socialist movement and chairman of the underground Polish parliament until August 1944, when he was called to London. A metal worker by trade, active in the Socialist and labor movement for over forty years.

**STANISLAS MIKOLAJCZYK**—Former Prime Minister; leader of the Polish Peasant Party. Prior to 1939 vice-chairman of the Peasant Party, himself a small farmer.

**JAN KWAPINSKI**—Deputy Prime Minister. A Socialist, prior to 1939 President of the Farm Laborers' Union and the Polish Trade Union Congress, Mayor of Lodz, a metal worker by trade.

**ADAM PRAGIER**—Minister of Information; a member of the Socialist Party. Formerly Professor of Economics at the Free University of Warsaw; imprisoned under the Pilsudski dictatorship.

**STANISLAS GRABSKI**—Chairman of the Polish National Council (parliament in exile) in London; leader of the National Democratic Party; historian.

**MARJAN KUKIEL**—Minister of Defense; a professional soldier not previously active in politics; formerly Professor of Military History at the University of Cracow.

**WLADISLAS RACZKIEWICZ**—President; prior to 1939 Marshal of the Senate; the only legal link between the London government and the former Pilsudski-Beck regime.

## Lublin

**BOLESŁAW BIERUT**—President. A Communist since 1922 (his real name is Krasnodebski); left Poland in the twenties for Comintern assignments and was next heard of when the Lublin Committee was formed. A Russian citizen.

**STEPHEN JENDRICHOWSKI**—Formerly Minister of Information, now Delegate to the French government. A veteran Communist and a Russian citizen. In 1940 he was elected to the Lithuanian Diet, and voted to join the Soviet Union.

**EDWARD OSUBKA-MORAWSKI**—Prime Minister; prior to 1939 a minor official of the co-operative movement in Warsaw and member of the Socialist Party, which he left during the war.

**EMIL SOMMERSTEIN**—Minister of Reconstruction; prior to 1939 a right-wing Zionist and supporter of the Pilsudski dictatorship; a lawyer.

**JAN GRUBECKI**—Former Minister of Communications. In the twenties a leader of an anti-Semitic youth organization which broke up labor meetings and beat up Jewish students.

**MICHAEL ROLA-ZYMIERSKI**—Minister of Defense. A member of the right-wing opposition to Pilsudski; expelled from the army and sentenced to five years imprisonment for accepting bribes.

**HILARY MINC**—The Minister of Industry and National Economy, **STANISLAS SKRZESZEWSKI**, the Minister of Education and a number of other members of the cabinet are veteran Communists.



### "FREE, STRONG, INDEPENDENT"

The real question is not how much of pre-war Poland shall belong to Russia and how much to Poland, which went to war to defend its territory and sovereignty. The real question is whether there is to be an independent Poland at all.

The membership of the Lublin government (see box) is not such as to inspire confidence in the type of government it would offer Poland if it were genuinely independent. But the make up of this "Free, Strong and Independent" government is less important than the fact that it was made in Moscow and made for the specific purpose of signing away almost half of Poland in the name of a people under the German heel, who could not be consulted. No government made in Moscow, symbol of so many partitions of this unhappy land, and no government which began its life with such an act, can possibly rule over the Polish people except with the aid of continuous and ruthless purges.

Conscious of its weakness, the Lublin government is already arresting and purging the leaders of the underground in the territories whose administration has been entrusted to it by the advancing Soviet armies.<sup>(\*)</sup> During Warsaw's heroic 63 day uprising against the Germans it not only tried to influence world opinion against giving arms and aid to the insurrection, but General Rola-Zymierski arrested and disarmed underground forces of the Polish Home Army that were going to its relief. Nor can it rule except with the aid of Russian bayonets, and constant Russian intervention to hold down the people over which it rules. A government so constituted violates every principle of democracy. A government resting on foreign bayonets is a perpetual threat of war.

### DILEMMA OF THE LONDON GOV'T

As democrats, we should insist that the Poles be permitted to have a government of their own choosing; that territorial settlements, to be decent, enduring, and safe for peace, should be arrived at by negotiation and agreement; that if there is disagreement—and there is—then the question be postponed till the end of the war and be settled by the impartial arbitration of all the United Nations.

Moreover, the people in the disputed area should have the final voice in settling their own fate. We cannot be party to a scheme in which millions of men and women are handed around as if they were bundles of faggots or lumps of coal. Nor can we ask the Polish Government-in-Exile and its underground Home Parliament to consent now to the loss of nearly one-half of their territory and one-third of their population before they have had a decent opportunity to consult

their own people and get a mandate from them.

The Polish Government, facing the desperate conditions of a series of ruthless purges and *faits accomplis*, has declared itself willing to negotiate concerning the "Curzon" Line as a "temporary demarcation line" until the end of the war, begging only for guarantees of genuine independence in the remaining half of Poland and one or two concessions on the "Curzon" Line—particularly the historic, overwhelmingly Polish city of Lwow, which never belonged to Russia in 600 years of its existence, until 1939. These are pitifully modest requests. It is cruel and false to call these elementary things "perfectionism." If the Polish Government goes beyond them, under the pressure of Churchill and Stalin, as part of the trade of Greeks for Poles, then it is forever disgraced in the eyes of its own people.

What kind of peace could the world build on such foundations? A peace that would begin with an open wound once more in the heart of Europe. Resentful Poles would detest the puppet government that had betrayed them, and been the agent of one more partition—the fifth. Russia, too, would be less secure. Generosity would make for a good and grateful neighbor. The opposite policy would be capitalized upon by the first new enemy of Russia that might arise. Worst of all, for the Poles, would be the horrible "compensation" with which they are now being tempted—thousands of square miles of ethnic Germany, more than a truncated Poland could ever digest or hold. That, too, would compel Poland to rest on Russian bayonets.

Who can fail to see in such a "settlement" the fearful outlines of a third world war? Who can fail to see how the moral conditions under which the present war is being waged have deteriorated since this secret trade of Greeks for Poles was hatched at Teheran?

It is a frightful travesty of our "Good Neighbor" policy to compare it to this. Since we proclaimed the policy, when have we ever compelled any government to sign away half its territory, deported a million and a half of its people, murdered the leaders and active members of its democratic and socialist parties? Under the pressure of wartime fears we have relaxed a bit, and tried to "dictate" the governments of Bolivia and Argentina. Doubtless, we have made mistakes—but there are no invasions, no deportations, no purges, no annexations by force. Nor would the conscience of America tolerate them. Actually it is just such beginnings of a higher morality in the relations between great powers and their lesser neighbors that is at stake. The kind of Europe and the kind of world which will emerge from this war is being determined now, in Poland. Poland has become the test for a moral and enduring peace.

<sup>(\*)</sup> By February there were five permanent and several temporary concentration camps in which members of the Polish Home Army and underground were being imprisoned. (See *N. Y. Times*, Feb. 7, 1945.)